

there is little cause for optimism. However, America must never confuse its role in the Middle East. We are not a party to the Arab-Israeli conflict and our role is predicated on the desire of both parties to have us work with them to secure peace.

As such, the United States is in a unique position to press for swift compliance, issue by issue, and force Arafat to decide once and for all, between peace and terror.

CONGRATULATING THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN) ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY (H.R. 282)

### HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 28, 1997*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am submitting today a Resolution (H.R. 282) congratulating the Association of South East Asian Nations [ASEAN] on the occasion of their 30th anniversary. ASEAN's emphasis on cooperation and the nonviolent settlement of disputes has fostered peace among its members in a region of the world which has long been wrought with instability and conflict. It is now difficult to visualize armed strife between ASEAN nations.

Since its inception in 1967, ASEAN has grown to become an influential political and economic grouping composed of nine member nations. By tempting the longstanding rivalries among its members, ASEAN helps to foster a stable and secure environment conducive to economic growth and the political development of Southeast Asian nations.

Its efforts to promote the economic, social, and cultural development of the region through cooperative programs; to safeguard the political and economic stability of the region; and to serve as a forum for the resolution of intra-regional differences has made ASEAN a model of regional integration.

The United States has important strategic, economic, and political interests at stake in Southeast Asia. Maintaining stability remains an overriding U.S. security interest in the region. Instability would not only threaten significant U.S. economic interests, but could also undermine important U.S. political relationships. ASEAN's Regional Forum [ARF], the region's only security consultative platform, is a key partner of the United States in maintaining regional stability.

The ASEAN countries provide the United States with significant commercial opportunities. ASEAN, is the fourth largest trading partner of the United States and constitutes a larger market for United States exports than the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong combined. Despite current difficulties, projections of future ASEAN growth indicate that the Southeast Asian regional market will become even more important to United States economic interests in the future. At the same time, U.S. policymakers hope to see greater trade liberalization among the nations of ASEAN as economic ties deepen.

The Congress rightfully has expressed its concern about the development of human rights and democracy for the nations of ASEAN but is pleased with the flourishing of democracy in Thailand and the Philippines. It

is hoped that these examples will encourage progress by the other nations of ASEAN in the furthering of democratic principles and practices, respect for human rights, and the enhancement of the rule of law.

The Congress looks forward to a broadening and deepening of friendship and cooperation with ASEAN in the years ahead for the mutual benefit of the people of the United States and the nations of ASEAN.

I call upon my colleagues in the House of Representatives to support this resolution.

H. RES. 282

Whereas 1997 marks the 30th anniversary of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN);

Whereas the emphasis of ASEAN on cooperation and the nonviolent settlement of disputes has helped to bring peace between the nations of the region which for decades had been characterized by instability and conflict;

Whereas the economies of the member nations of ASEAN have experienced significant economic growth benefiting the lives of many of their people;

Whereas ASEAN as a group is the 4th largest trading partner of the United States and constitutes a larger market for United States exports than the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong combined;

Whereas ASEAN has successfully fostered a sense of community among its member nations despite differing interests, including the establishment of the region's only security forum, the Association of South East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF), and the Association of South East Asian Nations Free Trade Area (AFTA);

Whereas ASEAN has played a pivotal role in international efforts of global and regional concern, including securing the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and diplomatic efforts to foster a political settlement to the civil war in Cambodia;

Whereas the United States relies on ASEAN as a partner in fostering regional stability, enhancing prosperity, and promoting peace; and

Whereas the 30th anniversary of the formation of ASEAN offers an opportunity for the United States and the nations of ASEAN to renew their commitment to international cooperation on issues of mutual interest and concern: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its member nations on the occasion of its 30th anniversary;

(2) looks forward to a broadening and deepening of friendship and cooperation with ASEAN in the years ahead for the benefit of the people of the United States and the nations of ASEAN;

(3) encourages progress by ASEAN members toward the further development of democracy, respect for human rights, enhancement of the rule of law, and the expansion of market economies; and

(4) recognizes the past achievements of ASEAN and pledges its support to work closely with ASEAN as both the United States and the nations of ASEAN face current and future regional and global challenges.

### WHAT HEALTH ANTI-TRUST POLICY?

### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 28, 1997*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, following is an editorial from the October 13, 1997, "Modern Healthcare." I wish I'd said it first.

#### AS GOVERNMENT CAVES, PROVIDERS MAKE THEIR OWN ANTITRUST POLICY

When the government sets antitrust policy for a particular industry, you would hope the policy is being driven by the concerns of buyers who are wary of the potentially anti-competitive market clout of sellers.

Not so in healthcare.

As evidenced by numerous events over the past several years, it's clear federal antitrust policy as it pertains to healthcare providers is guided by providers themselves and their well-paid lawyers and economists.

In other words, the sellers are setting their own rules of competition with the full acquiescence of federal lawmakers. The providers' sole justification? Trust us, we know what we're doing. We know what's best for patients.

In fact, the provider industry is so brazen and so confident it expects special treatment under the federal antitrust laws.

For a definition of brazen, read Mary Chris Jaklevic's coverage of the deal between the two largest hospitals in Grand Rapids, Mich., which merged despite not having final clearance from the Federal Trade Commission, or Charlotte Snow's story on how the only two acute-care hospitals in Greensboro, N.C., outwitted the FTC and the North Carolina attorney general's office to obtain their monopoly (Oct. 6, pages 2 and 14, respectively). The hospitals in both cases have promised to limit price increases and pass along millions of dollars in economic efficiencies to consumers.

Why shouldn't providers act with such bravado? The government has caved in to virtually all their demands:

In 1993 the FTC and the U.S. Justice Department release the first-ever antitrust enforcement guidelines for providers that created six "safety zones," or categories of business transactions that won't be subject to federal antitrust scrutiny.

In 1994 the two agencies revised the guidelines and added two more safety zones.

In 1996 the agencies released more lenient antitrust standards for reviewing physician networks.

Federal judges have thrown out the agencies' last three antitrust lawsuits against merging hospitals.

In a time when hundreds of deals are being put together, the government has only one pending case against merging hospitals and one against a physician network.

Despite all this, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who heads the Senate Judiciary Committee, recently said special antitrust rules for not-for-profit hospitals may be in order after he heard testimony from hospital executives, their lawyers and their consultants. Earth to Sen. Hatch.

Where are the buyers in this debate? The managed-care plans? The employers? The patients? Somehow, they've largely been left out of the antitrust policy reviews.

At first, newly consolidated hospitals and physicians will find it easy to generate economic efficiencies given the excess capacity and duplicated services in many markets. Only time will tell if they pass those benefits along to the public or use their power to stifle new competition. Let's hope somebody with influence is watching.